

## Message Text

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FOLG RECD FROM CALCUTTA AUG 16 RPTD YOUR INFO. QUOTE.

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, PINT, IN

SUBJ: CHARGES AGAINST KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS SOCIETY

1. ACCORDING TO SAMACHAR ARTICLE IN STATESMAN OF AUGUST 14, OM MEHTA, MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME, SAID GOI WOULD LOOK INTO AFFAIRS OF "KRISHNA CHAITANYA SOCIETY" IN WEST BENGAL "TO FIND OUT WHETHER THERE WAS SOMETHING 'FISHY ABOUT IT.'" MEHTA WAS RESPONDING TO QUESTION RAISED IN RAJYA SABHA BY CPI MEMBERS SANAT KUMAR RAHA AND KALYAN ROY, "WHO ALLEGED THAT THE SOCIETY WAS RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE USA AND WEST GERMANY, AND WAS INDULGING IN ANTI-INDIAN ACTIVITIES."

2. CALCUTTA ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA, AUGUST 14, CARRIES RELATED STORY OF INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF LEADERS OF KRISHNA SOCIETY TEMPLE IN WEST BENGAL. LEADER, AN AMERICAN, BEARING ADOPTED SECT NAME BHABANAMDA SWAMI, REPORTEDLY SAID TO ANANDA REPORTER, "WE SING THE NAME OF KRISHNA; WE HAVE NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH THE CIA." IN GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC ARTICLE, HE IS QUOTED AS HAVING INVITED RAHA

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OR ANYONE ELSE TO LIVE IN THE TEMPLE AND SEE THAT NOTHING

SECRET OR IMPROPER WAS OCCURRING. HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF THERE HAD BEEN ANYTHING SECRET, THE HOME DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING ABOUT IT, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE EMERGENCY.

3. COMMENT--INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS (ISKCON - POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE HARE KRISHNA SECT) HAS BUILT A TEMPLE/RESIDENCE ON ABOUT THIRTY ACRES OF LAND AT MAYAPUR IN NADIA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, NORTH OF CALCUTTA. ALTHOUGH AMERICAN MEMBERS OF SECT DO NOT REGISTER WITH CONSULATE, BUT ONLY COME TO SEE CONSULAR OFFICER WHEN THEY HAVE PROBLEMS, WE ESTIMATE THAT THERE ARE SOME FIFTEEN TO TWENTY AMERICANS LIVING IN MAYAPUR OUT OF A TOTAL RESIDENTIAL POPULATION OF 150. MAYAPUR IS TO BE THE WORLD HEADQUARTERS OF THE SECT AND IN ADDITION TO THE SUBSTANTIAL BUILDING ALREADY IN EXISTENCE, A GUEST HOUSE FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF TEMPORARY VISITORS IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. ISKCON ALSO HAS RATHER GRANDIOSE PLANS TO EXPAND THEIR HOLDINGS TO 500 ACRES AND BUILD AN AIRPORT AND 400-FOOT TALL "VEDIC PLANETARIUM". SOCIETY HAS FLEET OF VANS FITTED OUT WITH LOUDSPEAKERS AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT FOR PROSELYTIZING AROUND INDIA.

4. DURING RECENT TRIP THROUGH WEST BENGAL, CONGEN OFFICER LIEBOWITZ VISITED MAYAPUR WITH AND AT SUGGESTION OF NADIA DISTRICT OFFICIALS. ALTHOUGH THEY REGARDED PROJECT WITH A CERTAIN BEMUSEMENT, OFFICIALS WERE PLEASED WITH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ITS CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES PROVIDE TO LOCAL WORKERS. TEMPLE ALSO DISTRIBUTES FREE FOOD AND RUNS SCHOOL/ORPHANAGE. WE ALSO GATHER THAT TARUN KANTI GHOSH, CONGRESS POLITICIAN AND WEST BENGAL MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES, COMMERCE AND TOURISM IS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF SOCIETY.

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